

<b>STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA</b> Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)  <i>Refer <u>ALL</u> Inquiries to:</i> Gina Price	<b>REQUEST FOR INFORMATION NO.</b>	
	Due Date: July 16, 2012	
	Issue Date: ****  Commodity: <b>Employment Mentoring Training Services</b>	
E-Mail: gina.price@dhhs.nc.gov	Using Agency Name: Department of Health and Human Services	

**MAILING INSTRUCTIONS:**

All information shall be submitted electronically to the above email address.

**NOTICE TO VENDOR**

Request for Information (RFI) will be received via the email listed above until 5:00 p.m. on the day of closing.

**QUESTIONS**

Submit written questions to Gina Price until **July 9, 2012** via e-mail to gina.price@DHHS.nc.gov with "RFI Questions", \*\*\*\* in the Subject header.

**THE PURPOSE OF THIS "REQUEST FOR INFORMATION" IS TO SURVEY THE MARKET PLACE FOR SERVICES DESCRIBED HEREIN AND WILL NOT RESULT IN AN AWARD.**

**EXECUTION**

<b>VENDOR NAME:</b>	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	
<b>STREET ADDRESS:</b>	<b>P.O. BOX:</b>	<b>ZIP:</b>
<b>CITY &amp; STATE &amp; ZIP:</b>	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>	<b>TOLL FREE TEL. NO:</b>
<b>TYPE OR PRINT NAME &amp; TITLE OF PERSON SIGNING:</b>	<b>FAX NUMBER:</b>	
<b>AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE:</b>	<b>DATE:</b>	

**RFI Introduction**

Vocational Support Mentoring (VSM) is a term developed by North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (The Division) to describe a service provided by individuals with self-disclosed mental illness and/or substance use challenges for the purpose of mentoring individuals receiving vocational rehabilitation services in their pursuit of employment through recovery. The Division is seeking information on innovative approach(es) that enhance the employability and vocational success of these consumers through a mentoring approach. The Division is particularly interested in approaches that utilize promising practices such as peer support, vocational mentoring, and principles of recovery.

**Section I. Purpose**

The purpose of this RFI is to solicit information on the design and implementation of a program of services that utilize people with personal experience in the area of mental illness and/or substance use disorders as mentors in the execution of a vocational rehabilitation plan for employment. The mentors themselves will have a diagnosed mental illness and/or substance use disorder and are in long term recovery.

## **Section II. Background Information**

Individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders have struggled to find and keep employment. In Federal Fiscal Year 2011, close to 19,000 of consumers with these disabilities were served by the Division. Of those consumers whose cases closed after receipt of services, 52.56% achieved a successful employment outcome, which is below the standard set by the Rehabilitation Services Administration for VR agencies and the lowest success rate of all disability groups served by the Division. Traditional job coaching services fail to meet the needs of this population due to a lack of specific targeted support. This service would supplement job coaching services by dealing with a consumer's life skills and emotional state. VSM differs from a job coach as the focus is not on specific job skills or pre-employment but rather upon life and recovery skills in order to gain independence through employment.

VSM enhances employability and vocational success through a mentoring approach that incorporates the promising practices of peer support and vocational mentoring, through the lens of the principles of recovery including:

- Wellness self-management
- Personal and professional accountability
- Individualization
- Empowerment
- Partnership
- Dignity of risk taking
- Educated decision making
- Purpose, meaning, and value

Vocational Support Mentors are themselves individuals who have historically struggled with unemployment or underemployment and have been able to apply principles of recovery to their lives to manage their wellness and establish a career. They provide support, guidance, and education to others whose mental health/addiction challenges impede their ability to successfully obtain and maintain employment.

## **Section III. Scope of RFI**

This Request for Information (RFI) is intended to collect information and recommendations from vendors and other sources regarding: Existing practices

1. The types of agencies that currently and potentially would provide this service in terms of makeup, major disability populations served and other services currently being provided
2. Training curriculum for the vocational support mentors and other staff
3. Training programs for the vocational support mentors and other staff
4. Examples of cost models with line item budgets (including a narrative that explains the necessities of the cost and how they were calculated) associated with the following:
  - a. Development of Curriculum for vocational support mentors and other staff
  - b. Provision of training for vocational support mentors and other staff
  - c. Implementation of a pilot program to assess the proposed curriculum
  - d. Implementation of the service program statewide
  - e. The use of offsetting financial resources such as grants, contracts with other agencies, etc.

5. Training requirement/certifications of mentors currently in use by agencies:
  - a. Years of previous experience in mentoring
  - b. Certifications required for mentor staff
  - c. Any additional training provided or required of mentoring staff
  - d. Length of time in recovery required for mentoring staff
  - e. Major daily tasks required by the mentoring staff in serving consumers
6. Success rates, statistics on existing programs
  - a. Average length of time a consumer is receiving Vocational Support Mentoring services.
  - b. Percent of consumers that are going to work and the length of time they remain in employment
7. Any cooperative agreement with the public VR agency or other public agencies
  - a. Current rates and fees paid for this service
  - b. Descriptions of training provided to agency staff
8. Sustainability plans post training and initial implementation including long term statistics on the success of the program (if available)

#### **Section IV. RFI Procedures**

##### **A. Schedule**

Responses must be received by the date, time and the location specified on the cover sheet of this RFI. Respondents may be asked by DVRS to come to Raleigh to present and discuss their submissions. If asked, respondents will be notified of the specific date and time at least two weeks in advance of their presentation.

##### **B. Clarification Questions**

Clarification questions will be accepted as specified on the cover sheet of this RFI. All questions must be submitted via email. An addendum containing questions and answers will be issued as an addendum to this RFI.

##### **C. Response**

**Please note; this is a request for information only and not a request for services.**

###### **1. Content and Format**

The state expects concise, detailed, point-by-point responses to each of the RFI response items identified in Section III of this RFI.

It is desirable that all responses meet the following requirements:

- All information shall be submitted electronically.

###### **2. Rights to Submitted Materials**

All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to this RFI, and all documentation submitted by the various vendors shall become the property of NC DVRS when received.

Ideas, approaches, and options presented by vendors may be used in whole or in part by the State in developing a Request for Proposal (RFP) should the Division decide to proceed with an RFP. Further, combinations of ideas from various vendors may also become part of a RFP, based on consideration of

various submissions and the needs of the Division, which may differ from vendor's experiences in other places.

### **3. Cost of Response Preparation**

Any costs incurred by the vendor in preparing or submitting responses are the vendor's sole responsibility; the Division shall not reimburse any vendor for any costs incurred to include costs associated with presentations if requested.

### **4. Confidentiality**

In accordance with 9 NCAC 06B.0103, 06B.0207 and 06B.1001 and to promote maximum competition in the State competitive bidding process, the State may maintain confidentiality of certain types of information described in N. C. Gen. Stat. 132-1 et. Seq. Such information may include trade secrets defined by N.C. Gen. Stat. 66-152 and other information specifically exempted from the Public Records Act pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. 132-1.2. Vendor may designate appropriate portions of its response confidential, consistent with and to the extent permitted under the Statutes and Rules set forth above, by marking the top and bottom pages containing confidential information with a legend in boldface type "**CONFIDENTIAL**". By so marking any page, the Vendor warrants that it has formed a good faith opinion, having received such necessary or proper review by counsel and other knowledgeable advisers that the portions marked confidential meet the requirements of the Rules and Statutes set forth above. The State may serve as custodian of Vendor's confidential information and not as an arbiter of claims against Vendor's assertion of confidentiality. If an action is brought pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. 132-9 to compel the State to disclose information marked confidential, the Vendor agrees that it will intervene in the action through its counsel and participate in defending the State, including any public official(s) or public employee(s). The Vendor agrees that it shall hold the State and any official(s) and individual(s) harmless from any and all damages, costs, and attorney's fees awarded against the State in the action. The State agrees to promptly notify the Vendor in writing of any action seeking to compel the disclosure of Vendor's confidential information. The State shall have the right, at its option and expense, to participate in the defense of the action through its counsel. The State shall have no liability to Vendor with respect to the disclosure of Vendor's confidential information ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. 132-9 or other applicable law.

### **5. Obligations of the State**

The Division may choose to issue an RFP for the development and implementation an employment mentor program. However, this RFI is not a guarantee that an RFP will be issued for some or all of the services about which ideas and approaches are being sought.